

to improve their handling of crime victims as well. However, instead of passing this important piece of legislation that would have an immediate impact on state and local efforts to improve crime victims services, some in Congress prefer to focus their attention on proposals to amend the United States Constitution. I have reservations about amending the constitution while Congress has the ability to enact legislation instead to accomplish the same goal. I am more concerned that this focus on a constitutional amendment has slowed the pace of crime victim legislation over the past several years. It is critical that Congress pass and the President sign into law the Crime Victims Assistance Act this year.

In addition to the Crime Victims Assistance Act, Congress must pass this year the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act (VAWA II). Since enactment of the Violence Against Women Act in 1994, the number of forcible rapes of women have declined, and the number of sexual assaults nationwide have gone down as well. South Dakota organizations have received \$6.7 million in federal funding for domestic abuse programs and \$1.6 million in federal funding for battered women's shelters.

Despite the success of the Violence Against Women Act, domestic abuse and violence against women continue to plague our communities. Consider the fact that a woman is raped every five minutes in this country and more women are injured by domestic violence each year than by automobile accidents and cancer deaths combined. Local and state officials should have access to more—not fewer—resources to address domestic violence, and it is critical that programs authorized through VAWA II receive stable levels of funding for the next five years.

Supporters of a constitutional amendment for crime victims have withdrawn their proposal from consideration on the Senate floor this year. I am hopeful that my colleagues will seize this opportunity to continue the very valuable discussion on crime victims' rights and work to pass the Crime Victims Assistance Act and VAWA II as soon as possible.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Wednesday, May 10, 2000, the Federal debt stood at \$5,664,193,479,449.87 (Five trillion, six hundred sixty-four billion, one hundred ninety-three million, four hundred seventy-nine thousand, four hundred forty-nine dollars and eighty-seven cents).

One year ago, April 26, 1999, the Federal debt stood at \$5,571,920,000,000 (Five trillion, five hundred seventy-one billion, nine hundred twenty million).

Five years ago, May 10, 1995, the Federal debt stood at \$4,856,767,000,000 (Four trillion, eight hundred fifty-six billion, seven hundred sixty-seven million).

Ten years ago, May 10, 1990, the Federal debt stood at \$3,075,637,000,000 (Three trillion, seventy-five billion, six hundred thirty-seven million).

Fifteen years ago, May 10, 1985, the Federal debt stood at \$1,739,232,000,000 (One trillion, seven hundred thirty-nine billion, two hundred thirty-two million) which reflects a debt increase of almost \$4 trillion—\$3,924,961,479,449.87 (Three trillion, nine hundred twenty-four billion, nine hundred sixty-one million, four hundred seventy-nine thousand, four hundred forty-nine dollars and eighty-seven cents) during the past 15 years.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

ON THE RETIREMENT OF GORDON C. KERR

• Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to a member of my staff, an advisor, and a man I feel honored to call my friend, Gordon Kerr.

Gordon, who has served as my Chief of Staff since 1982, has retired from government service to join the National Trust for Historic Preservation as the Director of Congressional Affairs. His 17 years as my top aide made him the dean of Senate Chiefs of Staff.

Gordon has served me for these many years in a variety of ways. He has been an invaluable advisor on issues of public policy and legislative strategy, as well as on personal and political matters. He has a clear-eyed, straightforward, right-in-your-face way of evaluating issues and events, and expressing his opinion about them which makes it nearly impossible to walk a bad idea past him. At least not without his calling you on it.

And yet, the first thing that anyone who knows Gordon immediately says is, "what a wonderful human being". How does a plain-speaking, realist like Gordon, come to be so uniformly regarded with such warmth and affection? It's simple when you think about it. Gordon is so open, principled, ethical and kind-hearted in his approach to the people he comes in contact with that it is nearly impossible to take offense at his candid advice. I'm reminded of what I've read about Robert Kennedy who also was known both for his brusque, sometimes harsh candor, but also for his high principles, and thoughtful consideration of others. "My, he is unassimilated, isn't he?" poet Robert Lowell was reported to have said when he first met him.

In all, Gordon spent more than 30 years on Capitol Hill, beginning as a Legislative Assistant for former-Congressman James Scheuer of New York in 1970, joining former-Congresswoman Barbara Jordan of Texas in 1973, and then working for former-Congressman Jonathan Bingham of New York from 1973 until 1982, when he joined my staff as Chief of Staff. Gordon is a graduate of Yale University with a B.A. degree

in Political Science and he holds a Masters degree in Public Administration with Distinction from American University, awarded in 1980. He served in the United States Navy as an Intelligence Officer for three years.

In 1990, Gordon served as my campaign manager. Former Senator Eugene McCarthy, with his wonderful irreverent sense of humor, once remarked that practicing politics is a little "like being a football coach; you have to be smart enough to understand the game, but dumb enough to think it's important." Well, Gordon is a brilliant strategist, an outstanding "coach", and although his acute sense of humor would appreciate Senator McCarthy's self-deprecating quip, nonetheless he's always known the importance of the game. He's proud of the work he's done in the Senate as a public servant, and rightly so. And, he's proud of his work in the world of campaigns and politics, doing his part on that tough battleground. He was ever-conscious of the role of politics, which we sometimes tend to forget, in the accountability which is at the heart of the democratic system.

Characteristic of Gordon is his ability to see things from a new, fresh, sometimes unique angle. In a time when even the public policy debate is increasingly driven by political polls, television sound-bites, and oversimplified sloganeering, it was particularly valuable to me to have his contributions. Even when I did not ultimately adopt his viewpoint or accept his recommendation, having the benefit of Gordon's input nearly always informed my decisions.

While Gordon has been a dedicated public servant and loyal and hard-working employee, his first priority has always been his wonderful family. His love of his wife Suzy, his son Charlie and daughter Sarah were evident in his voice whenever he spoke of them and in the special sparkle in his eyes when he was with them. I know I speak not only for myself and the Levin family, but for the entire Levin staff and many in the Senate family, when I say we will miss Gordon and the Kerr family. Fortunately, in his new role at the National Trust for Historic Preservation he won't be too far away.

Mr. President, I owe Gordon Kerr a great debt for the loyal service which he has performed; and I believe that all of us here in the Senate, in my home state of Michigan, and in the nation, owe a debt of gratitude to him and the many like him who serve us here. This tribute to Gordon Kerr, in a small way, is an effort to recognize that role.●

TRIBUTE TO EDWARD KEHOE

• Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, today I rise to pay tribute to an extraordinary Vermonter and a determined leader, Edward Kehoe. Ed Kehoe was born in Rutland, my hometown, to the late James and Grace Kehoe and graduated from Rutland High School